THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (b) Some of the National Highway sections in the country are affected by damages like cracking, potholes, erosion of berms, ravelling etc. due to heavy traffic, overloading, climate etc. In Karnataka NH-4A, 13,17, 48, 63, 209, 212, 218 are in bad condition.

(c) and (d) The development and maintenance of National Highway is a continuous process. Time frame may not be specified for completion of the development and maintenance proejct. Repair works wherever required are taken up immediately and National Highways are being kept in traffic worthy condition within the available resources. Rs. 11253.62 crore and Rs. 814,38 crore is allocated for the development and maintenance of the National Highways during current year 2006-07.

Link between Shipping and National Inland Water Transport system in NER

220. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the proposals for introducing link between shipping and National Inland Water Transport System over river Brahmaputra and Barak river in North-Eastern region;

(b) whether the States in North-Eastern region have finalized the acquisition of land for four lane road system; and

(c) whether there is any proposal for introduction of Toll System for Construciton of roads and bridges on national highways in North-Eastern region?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI TR. BAALU): (a) Brahmaputra and Barak rivers in the North-Eastern Region are already linked to sea through designated routes under Inland Water Transport Transit and Trade Protocol between India and Bangladesh. Under this Protocol, vessels of one country can ply through the designated routes of the other country.

(b) For four-laning work under East-West Corridor passing through the State of Assam, process of land acquisition is in progress. Detailed Project

Report (DPR) preparation is in progress for 4-laning under the National Hgihways Development Project (NHDP) Phase III and Special Accelerated Road Development Programme-North East (SARDP-NE) in North East Region and the acquisition of land will depend on the DPR.

(c) As per the policy of Central Government, user fee shall be levided on all projects involving conversion from 2 lanes to 4 lanes. The stand alone bridges qualifying the minimum cost criteria as per National Highways (Rate of Fee) Rules 1997, shall also be tolled.

Foreign Ships in Mundra Port

221. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of foreign ships carrying wheat and urea, etc., in the month of October, 2006, were made to wait outside the Mundra port by the Port authorities for more than ten days before they could unload their goods;

(b) if so, what were the various reasons for this infrastructural failure;

(c) whether it is a fact that delay in discharging cargo costs ,about $60,000 per day to the foreign ships bearing wheat;

(d) the persons as per Government's view, responsible for the loss suffered by the waiting ships; and

(e) the corrective steps Government propose to initiate in the matter?

. THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI TR. BAALU): (a) to (e) Due to acute shortage, large amount of wheat and fertilizer was imported in the country during the months of September and October en Government account. During the month of October 2006, Mundra port handled 5,63,242 MT of wheat and fertilizer on 2 berths capable of accommodating large panamax ships. Huge import of food grains resulted in bunching of ships causing delay in berthing of ships in some cases. The cost of waiting ships depends on the charter party agreement between the supplier and the ship owner and varies from one ship to another.